

Isle of Wight Biodiversity Action Plan

STEERING GROUP

Minutes of the sixth steering group meeting held on 6th December 2000 10.30am IWC Seaclose Offices, Newport

Present: Ian Boyd, Island 2000 Trust
Matthew Chatfield, Senior Countryside Officer, Isle of Wight Council
Sarah Dawkins, Conservation Officer, RSPB
Andrew Gordon, Conservation Officer, English Nature
Richard Grogan, Wight Wildlife Officer
David Langford, Regional Director, Country Landowners Association
Anne Marston, Assistant Ecology Officer, Isle of Wight Council
Colin Pope, Ecology Officer, Isle of Wight Council
Tony Tutton, Property Manager, National Trust

Apologies: Paul Airey, Policy and Environment Manager, Isle of Wight Council
Fiona Dixon, National Farmers' Union
Angela Mawle, Local Agenda 21 Officer, Isle of Wight Council
Debbie Wicks, Conservation Officer, Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust

SG00/18 The minutes of the last meeting were agreed and signed.

SG00/19 Matters arising from the minutes (other than agenda items)

SG00/04 Sales of the BAP audit have been steady. There are now about 80 remaining. It was agreed that a stock of 40 should be retained as reference copies.

SG00/14 MC welcomed Ian Boyd, Project Director of Island 2000 to the meeting, who gave a resume of the work of the Trust. It evolved from the AONB project. At the end of the AONB funding, an interim project worked to a committee for six months, and then a Trust was set up using Landfill Tax Credits. It is a non-profit-making charity, with a trading subsidiary for non-charitable aspects. There are seven full-time members of staff and five programmes. Its purpose is to link aspects of landscape quality to aspects of economic development. Both factors are important in a regional context and may conflict. The Trust has the freedom to explore new projects and ideas to reconcile these conflicts. Income is being generated via the trading company, to make the Trust self-sufficient when the present funding comes to an end. There is no particular conservation remit but there is a biodiversity strand to the work in the Natural Assets programme. The Eastern Yar project has 2 main strands: diffuse pollution control in the upper catchment, and water level management in the lower catchment, and both have a strong biodiversity element. There are links between the Farmers' Market and the proposed grazing project.

The Environment Agency's involvement in the BAP process was briefly discussed. They are finding it extremely difficult to attend meetings on the Island, but have promised £2000 towards the funding of the HAP production, and are major contributors to the East Yar valley project. It is hoped that they will play an active part in the development of the Wetland HAP.

SG00/20 Progress with Habitat Action Plans

The proposal prepared by Jonathan Cox and a draft schedule for the production of the first three HAPs were circulated for discussion

Issues raised:

1) There was a brief discussion on the habitat classification of land, and the forthcoming survey to be done in relation to the Countryside and Rights of Way Act. It is important to standardise the terminology to be used and its relationship to biological information currently held. AG is to attend a CROW Training Course shortly and agreed to report back to the next Steering Group.

2) The draft schedule was modified to fit provisional dates for Steering Group meetings, and will be finalised after discussion with Jonathan. It will form part of the contract to be drawn up with him. MC and AG to discuss the details of the contract billing and schedule. The timetable needs to be sent to the IWC best value team so they are aware of progress being made.

3) The first three plans would have a target launch date of December 2001. They need to be linked to the Environmental Stewardship strand of Agenda 21; the BAP is the main strand of this.

4) Are three separate seminars required? Wetland includes grazing marsh, and has similar issues to chalk grassland; the same landowners may be involved in grazing both. It was agreed to combine these habitats into one seminar and have a separate one for maritime cliffs and slopes. As Coastal Protection Agency, the Isle of Wight Council has a large role to play in the development of the latter plan. Money may also be available from the Rights of Way department.

5) How should be grazing animals plan and the HAPs be phased, as they are sides of the same coin? Jonathan Cox is involved in writing both plans, so he should be in the best position to integrate the two. There is a need to distinguish between strategy and implementation of the BAP. The grazing animals plan is a means for farmers to implement the HAP as it seeks to make the process more economically viable.

6) Timetable for the production of the HAPs discussed and provisionally agreed. It is to be discussed with Jonathan Cox and to form part of contract which will be drawn up between the Steering Group and him. Technical and public information documents will need to be produced.

Action: MC to contact Jonathan Cox to set up contract

Action: Schedule for HAP production to be circulated with the minutes AEM

7) Grazing Animals project – report back from meeting held on 4th December attended by Andy Gordon and Richard Grogan. The meeting reported back on the progress of the Hampshire project which employs Damien Offer as a Project Officer. A bid has been made (£150,000) for such a project on the Isle of Wight and it is likely to be successful. English Nature would fund half of this and matched funding will be required from another source.

The criteria for rural development schemes, rather than those with a conservation bias, are more likely to be suitable for the scheme envisaged. The Rural Enterprise scheme is looking for projects with sustainable development, economic growth, and biodiversity as components. A scoping exercise needs to be carried out (AG/RG) to look at the potential and constraints on the

Island, to decide, for example whether a grazing officer is required or whether there is a more effective use for the money. Requirements on the ground which need financing include fencing, water troughs and an abattoir. CLA has contacts with producer groups. A joint bid involving English Nature, Wight Wildlife, NFU, CLA could be made, and the BAP Steering Group could be the project steering group.

Action AG to produce paper which explores the options to be circulated before the next Steering Group meeting

SG00/21 Education and awareness

The paper produced for the September meeting, and the DETR guidance note were briefly discussed and the following points emerged

- 1) The media need to be seen as a target for education
- 2) IB suggested a number of routes into the commercial and industrial sectors on the Island.
- 3) RG suggested that there are people already putting across biodiversity messages and we could tap into this network.
- 4) There is a need to find ways of communicating “like to like” eg farmers speaking to other farmers, where there is practical knowledge of problems, opportunities and possible solutions. It is also important to understand the constraints people perceive, and look at solutions to overcome these.
- 5) Each HAP/SAP will need to contain some specific education and awareness measures, including practical ideas and sources of advice for farmers etc. There may also be the need for a specific education and awareness action plan.
- 6) There is a need to reach key decision-makers in political, economic, business, agricultural educational sectors, and identify who might be in a position to put across messages.
- 7) A local perspective is required, so that local people are encouraged to “value their own backyard” and see this as part of a larger country and world-wide process.
- 8) The BAP education and awareness programme needs to be considered in the light of the Agenda 21 process

Action: Ideas for furthering education and awareness within the interests/ contacts/ experience of each Steering Group organisation to be with Anne Marston by 12th January 2001, please. These will then be collated and circulated before the next meeting

nb A **newsletter** is due and contributions are required. If you have any **material please** send it to **Anne Marston by 29th January 2001**. The aim is to send it out by mid February 2001.

ALL

SG00/22 Any other business

A list of steering group e-mail addresses will be circulated, and Steering Group minutes will be e-mailed in future, unless papers not in electronic form also require circulation. It would be helpful if materials to be circulated could be made available in electronic form in future.

SG00/23 Date of next meetings	Thursday 8 th February 2001	10.30am
	Thursday 17 th May 2001	10.30am
	Monday 10 th September 2001	2pm
	Tuesday 11 th December 2001	10.30am

all at IWC Offices, Seaclose, Newport